

APRIL 7, 2003

Commission Order No. 2001-996 sets out the guidelines and administrative procedures for the USF, and provides that after the Initial Phase, on April 1 of each year, beginning in 2003, each ILEC receiving USF support may file tariff reductions and request additional USF support to fund the continued removal of implicit support contained in rates. Such filings will be considered by the Commission and a decision rendered by September 1 of the same year for inclusion in the state USF as sized each October 1. Additionally, Order No. 2001-996 provides that companies seeking rate reductions shall also file detailed cost

data clearly demonstrating that implicit support exists in the rates that are proposed to be reduced. Any such tariff filings shall be made by April 1, 2003 and the Commission's decision will be rendered by August 1, 2003.

By its counsel's letter of March 27, 2003, the SCTC filed with the Commission a request that the Commission extend the April 1, 2003 deadline to file its tariffs associated with the USF. The SCTC respectfully requests that an extension be granted to the companies of the SCTC to file their related tariffs and accompanying cost data until June 1, 2003.

The SCTC asserts that the reason for its request is that the Commission only took action this week on the request of six local exchange carriers to reduce rates and draw State USF in the end user step of the first phase of implementation of the State USF.¹ Because it was the first time the Commission addressed the issue of the cost studies filed by the various companies, the SCTC expresses that its members felt it advisable not to undertake the expense of new or additional cost studies until matters relating to the first phase of the State USF were resolved by the Commission. The SCTC states that additional time is needed by the SCTC companies to evaluate whether they will apply for additional State USF at this time, and if so, to complete the appropriate cost studies. Lastly, the SCTC states its belief that granting the requested extension will not significantly impair the Commission's ability to implement additional USF funding, to the extent any such additional funding is requested by October 1, 2003, and that this is

¹ The action stated herein relates to the Commission's weekly agenda meeting that was held March 25, 2003. At this meeting, the Commission addressed the request of six local exchange carriers that was pending in Docket No. 97-239-C, and from which an Order will be issued by the Commission.

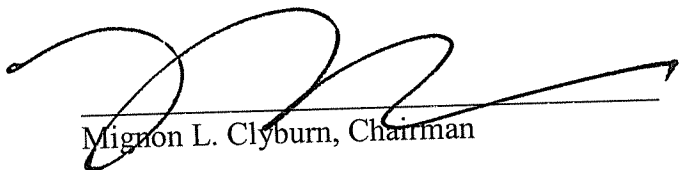
particularly true since the Commission recently gave Alltel South Carolina, Inc. approval for an extension in this matter.

The Commission finds and concludes that the SCTC's request for an extension of time to file tariffs and accompanying cost data associated with the USF should be granted.

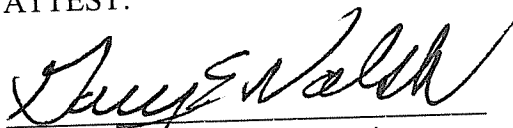
IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:

1. The deadline of April 1, 2003, as set forth in Commission Order No. 2001-996, shall be extended to June 1, 2003, for the companies of the South Carolina Telephone Coalition to file tariffs and accompanying cost data associated with the South Carolina Universal Service Fund.

2. This Order shall remain in full force and effect until further Order of the Commission.


Mignon L. Clyburn, Chairman

ATTEST:


Gary E. Walsh, Executive Director

(SEAL)